



Maricopa County

News Release

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MONSOON IS HERE! TAKE PREPAREDNESS BY STORM!

Safety tips by Maricopa County Environmental Services Department to follow after the flood or an energy outage

Monsoon storms are here. As you may know, in 2008 the National Weather Service decided to take the guesswork out of monsoon start and end dates. From now on June 15 is the first day of the monsoon, and September 30 is the last day.

Serious damage can occur from high winds, or from debris being tossed by those high winds. It is not unusual for trees to be downed, power lines to be damaged, and roof damage to occur. When such high volume rain descends upon the Valley of the Sun, the ground and most especially the surface streets flood, and many homes and businesses are affected by these floods as well.

"Being aware of potential problems will help you be prepared", says John Kolman, Maricopa County Environmental Services Department interim director. "Cleaning up after a flood or power outage often means facing many new problems in salvaging your family's belongings, even for temporary use".

In the event of a flood or extended power outage, this information is provided to help you recover safely and in good health.

Some Safety Tips to Consider:

Be aware that floods as well as power outages can have a negative effect on local utilities. Stay away from downed power lines and report loss of power or water pressure to your service provider. In the event water utilities are negatively impacted follow directions given by the Environmental Services Department and your service provider.

In the event your home or business is impacted by flood water be aware that electrical shock from open or broken wiring, especially under wet conditions is possible. Don't enter a flooded or wet building or use electrical outlets without checking with a qualified electrician (utility company, private contractor, or city/county building inspector).

For those homeowners who rely on a private well for their water service, be aware that flooding brings an increased risk for contamination and possible damage to your well. The department recommends that wells that have been impacted by flood water be inspected by a qualified water well professional.

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POWER OUTAGE DOs AND DON'ts

- 1.) Try not to open your refrigerator or freezer too often. Every time it is opened the cold air will escape and the temperatures of the food will go up.
- 2.) If possible, obtain dry ice for your frozen foods. Add it carefully and then leave the door closed.
- 3.) When power is restored or if you are using food from the refrigerator during the outage, make sure it is in the temperature safe zone - 41° F or below.
- 4.) If food goes above 41° F, it is important to know how long it is in the temperature danger zone.
If the food is in the danger zone for over six hours, accelerated bacteria growth can occur. Food should be thrown out. David Ludwig, Environmental Health Division manager, reminds everyone that: "Only some bacteria can be killed by cooking, so don't take a chance."
- 5.) Make sure that you thoroughly cook all food to 165° F and take care not to cross contaminate surfaces.

FOOD IMPACTED BY FLOOD WATERS

If you're not sure it's safe to eat, throw it away! Items that should be thrown out if they have been contaminated by flood water:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Fresh meat and poultry
- Home-canned foods
- Medicine and cosmetics
- Packages that are not waterproof, such as frozen foods
- Any food that has been thawed out or not refrigerated
- Punctured or leaking metal cans (Note: If the can is in good condition, remove the label, mark with crayon, rinse can in sudsy water and soak for 1 minute in a chlorine bleach solution—4 tablespoons bleach to 2 gallons of water.)

Keep handy a list of emergency phone numbers, such as your local police and firefighter stations, organizations such as American Red Cross, Salvation Army and the Maricopa County Emergency Management (unincorporated areas) – phone number 602-273-1411, for information regarding emergency food, clothing and shelter

You may also want to obtain the brochure "Recovering after a Flood", available at Maricopa County Environmental Services Department different locations to be used as a reference guide for county residents.

"Knowing what to do before and after a storm can help keep your family and your property safe", stresses John Kolman, Maricopa County Environmental Services Department interim director.

For more information, you may contact the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department at (602) 506-6616 and visit www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/.

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